

Southeast PTO Meeting Minutes

November 5, 2012

Members in Attendance: Jana MacDonald, Cyndi Wells, Gwen Sgro, Julie Campbell, Dan Blanchard, Noreen Halbrooks, Jennifer Mott, Monique Brown, Esther Soffer Roberts, Jess Higham, Erin Clark, Matt Hart

Meeting was called to order at 7:06 p.m.

Agenda:

1. Sara Anderson could not attend the meeting, so the discussion regarding the Community Playground at Storrs Center was cancelled.
2. Marie Liebman's son passed away last month. The PTO approved the allotment of \$50-75, so that we could dedicate books for Southeast in his memory. He was very involved in the Fidelco guide dog program. It was suggested that we look for some books in that area.
3. **Southeast network:** Savory Samples was postponed and the new date will likely be in February.
4. **Principal's report (Norma Fisher-Doiron):** Parent / teacher conferences will be held the week of thanksgiving. There will be early closings that week. Friday, 11/9, is the last day of running club. They (third and fourth graders) will be going down into the woods with flashlights. Science sampler (for third and fourth grade) starts Wednesday. Norma complimented the parents who went to the town council meeting last month. In the past, the town council had not heard from the Southeast community, but we took the opportunity to have our voices heard. She felt it was a research based, professional presentation and she was very proud the parents who participated. Norma is asking for recommendations for winter / spring parent's hour. Parent's hour meets from 6-7 p.m. before each PTO meeting to discuss a topic of choice. Suggestions included Dan Blanchard (an author and southeast parent), school climate and hurricane relief. Cyndi will likely send out a survey, asking for more input from parents.
5. **VP report (submitted by Jess Higham)**

Since our last meeting, the Jeannine Fundraiser has closed and initial estimates look like we did better than last year! We brought in over \$2500 worth of orders and we usually get between 40-50% back. The final invoice will have the total amount we made. Last year this fundraiser made \$750 so even if we get 40% back on \$2500 that would be \$1000 profit! The order will be delivered to us on November 26th and will be distributed soon after that. Thank you to Erin Ballou for organizing again this year.

Holiday card fundraising through Jeannine is happening right now. One flyer has come home already, more to come in subsequent weeks. Families can design and order cards online, cards are sent directly to your home. The PTO will make 30% profit and a check will be sent to us in December. Questions, please ask Erin Ballou.

Unfortunately, the Fall Bulb Sale did not hit the minimum amount of orders needed to run this fundraiser. I would suggest sending out flyers earlier next fall to ensure a decent return on this time investment.

School Photo retakes were postponed due to Hurricane Sandy and will now be held on Thursday, November 8th. I know we are still in the process of receiving all of our photo packages but any feedback that families have about G&B Photography would be greatly appreciated, as we will be making a decision soon as to whether or not we will be using this company again next year. Please let me know any positive or negative feedback that you may have so that we can make an informed decision moving forward. Thanks again to Patty Braithwaite for organizing.

Tomorrow, Tuesday, November 6th is Election Day and with that brings the Southeast PTO Election Day Bake Sale that will be held outside of the Buchanan Auditorium, our local polling station. Jean Johnson has done an excellent job organizing this event and we hope it will bring us additional revenues as well as showing our active PTO to the wider community. If you are voting, please stop by the booth and purchase something. If you have some time to volunteer, please let Jean know, we are still in need of volunteers from 1:30 in the afternoon until 8:00PM.

Maryann Olson is organizing the UConn Book fair again this year. Flyers will be coming home this week looking for volunteers to work during the book fair. Please take a look and consider donating some time to this fundraiser that raises money for the Southeast Library.

During November conferences we will be holding our annual Fall Pie Sale. Jana MacDonald will be organizing this event. Please look for a flyer coming home sometime soon.

The 2012 WAIM Walk for Warmth will be held on Sunday, November 18th. SE is hoping for a big group of walkers for our walking team this year. There is a minimum \$20 donation for each walker and the funds go to heat the homes of families in need throughout the area including Mansfield families. We understand that this is a busy time of the year for people and we wanted you to know that even if you can't walk, you are welcome to send in a check made out to WAIM and we will bring the donation on your behalf. Checks should be sent in an envelope marked Jessica Higham, SE PTO, Walk for Warmth. Look for a flyer coming home in Friday folders this week for more information.

Speaking of giving back to our community, SE will once again be working with the character education committee to organize the Adopt-A-Family program this holiday season. Last year our school community purchased holiday gifts for 25 individuals from Mansfield that were in need. The families were so appreciative of our generosity; I hope that we can make the holidays just as bright for the children on our list again this year. Flyers will be coming home in mid November explaining this program. If you would like to help out with this worthwhile cause, please contact Jessica Higham.

Lastly, Cyndi Wells, Lena Rossi, Esther Soffer Roberts and Amy Dunstan will be coordinating the Cocoa, Carols and Crafts event this year. Last year was our first year running this program and it was well received. This is a free evening for SE families to come together and do holiday crafts, sing carols and drink cocoa. Look for a flyer coming home at the end of November and please plan to join us in December for this fantastic community event.

Other items discussed:

We will be collecting canned goods at several events in November and December.

Lena volunteered to organize a used clothing sale on February 1st and 2nd. It will take place in the gym. It was suggested that we hold a movie night at the same time, so the kids could enjoy a fun evening while their parents shop. Every seller will get a number and they will be responsible for tagging their own clothes. A percentage of the sales will go to Southeast. Lena will look into buying hangers from “Emma’s Closet,” a consignment shop in Hebron that will be closing at the end of the week. Jess will fill out a building request form.

Several people talked about getting the kids involved in a hurricane relief project. Suggestions included “adopting a family” in another town for the holidays, donating supplies to a school in need, holding a toy drive, etc. Norma will talk with the care committee about this.

6. **Treasurer’s report (Gwen Sgro):** Our current balance is \$21,674.
Sue Irvine will be talking with parents to discuss new enrichment opportunities.
The PTO board will be updated with financial information.
7. **Secretary’s report (Jana MacDonald):** Esther Soffer Roberts made a motion to accept the September minutes. Monique Brown seconded that motion. Esther Soffer Roberts made a motion to accept the October minutes. Monique Brown seconded that motion.
8. **President’s report (Cyndi Wells):** We discussed the school building project survey and discussed possible “next steps.” There is another town council meeting next Tuesday (11/13) at 7:30 p.m.. We would like to organize another group of parents to attend. People from Vinton and Goodwin might be at the Town Council meeting as well. We want to have the opportunity to reiterate our strong points from the last meeting, if need be. Perhaps we could share some results of the survey? Cyndi will send out an email, inviting parents to come. She will also share the survey results with the town council and the board of education prior to the meeting. Cyndi feels very strongly that the town council’s decision should be based on data, not on parent’s opinion so as not to divide the community. One parent mentioned that they would like to hear more discussion on the 3 school option, instead of talking about why southeast is the better choice.

9. The Scholastic book fair will take place on June 3rd (or 4th) through the 7th. We will end the book fair with an ice cream social on Friday, June 7th. Norma mentioned that the three days we missed from Hurricane Sandy will likely be tacked on to the end of the year. There will be no PTO meeting in December.

Meeting adjourned at 8:30 p.m.

Respectfully submitted by,

Jana MacDonald, secretary
Southeast PTO

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